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### SOME ACCOUNT OF A BOROUGH.

As there can be no place, however insignificant, where men have congregated, and acted their various parts in the drama of life, without its history; so there can be no history, however trivial, without its moral. We need not, then, apologise for occupying the reader's attention with so poor a place as Our Borough. Moreover, obscure though it be, it has been consecrated by the footsteps, and immortalised by the pencil of genius. The great pictorial moralist, satirist, and, we may say, historian of his era—he who held the mirror up to nature, shewing vice her own features, scorn her image, and the very age and body of the time its form and pressure—did not disdain to draw its main and only street; and as it was then, so it is now at the present day. One hundred and twenty-three years ago, on a fine May morning, Will Hogarth, Thornhill his brother-in-law, Scott the landscape-painter, and two other friends and boon-companions, started from the Bedford Arms Tavern, in Covent Garden, 'to the tune of *Why should we quarrel for Riches?*' The first land they made was Billingsgate, where they 'dropped anchor at the Darkhouse;' from whence, after Hogarth had made a *caricature* of the Duke of Puddledock, they embarked for Gravesend. How, in the boat, with straw for a bed and a tilt for a covering, they ate hung-beef, drank Hollands, smoked tobacco, and sung St John—how they landed at Gravesend, got their wigs powdered, and went to Rochester, where Hogarth and Scott chalked out a hop-scotch, and played that juvenile game under the very colonnade of the town-hall, to the utter dismay and disgust of the parish-beadle—how they visited Sheerness, where Hogarth was laughed at 'for sitting down to cut his toe-nails in the garrison'—we have nothing whatever to do with. Besides, is it not all related and portrayed in the facetious journal they brought back to amuse the members of their club?—which was subsequently published, and to which we refer those of our readers who are not too refined to enjoy a laugh at the coarse frolics of our ancestors. But when they left Sheerness, as they journeyed to Queenborough, the subject-borough of this paper, we are bound to follow them there, and describe it in the words of Forrest, the historiographer of the merry expedition. 'The town is but one street, and answers the description I have heard of a Spanish town—namely, there is no sign of any trade, nor were many human creatures to be seen at our first arrival.' They found, 'to their sorrow,' that though Queenborough was a market-town, yet they could not procure 'one piece of fresh meat of any sort, nor poultry, or fish.' They, however, 'got a wooden chair,

and placed Hogarth in it, in the street, where he made a drawing, and gathered a great many men, women, and children, to see his performance.' They visited the church, and found nothing there worthy of notice. But they had a conference with the grave-digger, who informed them that the mayor was a custom-house officer, and the parson a sad dog. Hogarth's party would have had another laugh if they had known that the mayor, when not engaged in official duties, followed his humble occupation of a thatcher; and if they had known that the incumbent's stipend was only L.52 per annum, with a right of grazing worth about L.7 more, they might have said that the Queenborough people could not expect a very merry dog for so little money.

John Taylor, the water-poet—who made a *Penniless Pilgrimage* into Scotland in 1639, and rode a-hunting in the Highlands when Englishmen knew as little of them as of Timbuctoo—also visited Queenborough, in a very extraordinary manner. Having constructed a boat of brown paper and bladders, Taylor, in company with a congenial soul, a jolly vintner named Roger Bird, sailed from London on a Saturday, and, after many adventures and dangers, found themselves, to their great joy, at daylight on the following Monday morning, close to Queenborough, where they gladly landed, and Taylor thus describes their reception in his *Praise of Hempseed*:

The mayor of Queenborough, in love, affords  
To entertain us, as we had been lords.  
It is a yearly feast, kept by the mayor,  
And thousand people thither do repair,  
From towns and villages that's near about,  
And 'twas our luck to come in all this rout.  
I' the street, bread, beer, and oysters is their meat,  
Which freely, friendly, shot-free, all do eat.  
But Hodge and I were men of rank and note,  
We to the mayor gave our adventurous boat,  
The which (to glorify that town of Kent)  
He meant to hang up for a monument.  
He to his house invited us to dine,  
Where he had cheer on cheer, and wine on wine,  
And drink and fill, and drink, and drink, and fill  
With welcome upon welcome, welcome still.

Taylor does not tell us the trade or calling of this hospitable mayor; but as we have seen that, in Hogarth's time, the mayor was a thatcher, and as there is a monument in the church-yard to a mayor-mariner, we may conclude that he did not hold a very high social position. Even in this present century, a mayor who died in 1829, was not above performing the offices of both judge and executioner, as his predecessors in the mayoralty had done before him. The general punishment for petty offences in Queenborough was a flogging;

and the mayors, after passing sentence *ex officio*, would descend from the judgment-seat, and with their own hands apply the lash. Men-of-war's-men from the dockyard of Sheerness used to be very fond of larking-excursions in the neighbouring villages, but they carefully avoided Queenborough. The summary jurisdiction, the nervous arm, and formidable cart-whip of the mayor, were worse than the court-martial, the cat-o'-nine-tails, and the boatswain's mate.

Long, indeed, before either Hogarth or Taylor visited Queenborough, its mayor had been described in rather contemptuous language. In the *Academy of Compliments*, published in 1614, we find the following uncompimentary mention of that functionary, among a long collection of doggerel truisms:

Pease-pottage is a Lenten dish;  
 Pudding is neither flesh nor fish;  
 Some cheese will choke a daw;  
 The mayor of Queenborough is a clown;  
 The lawyer wears a dagged gown;  
 Wat Tyler and Jack Straw.

Queenborough is situated in a nook of the fertile county of Kent, about three miles from Sheerness, where the island of Sheppey is divided from the mainland by the creek or channel termed the Swale. Its original name was Middleton; but, somehow or other—for, as Napoleon said of Gibraltar, 'it opens nothing, shuts nothing, leads to nothing'—Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III., happening to land there, that monarch, in honour of the event, gave it the name of Queenborough. Considering it an advantageous place for commerce, Edward gave the town a charter, constituting it a free and perpetual borough. The twenty-six houses then in the place were endowed with rich pasture-lands, and the valuable oyster-fishery of the Swale was given to the burgesses for ever. The powers granted to the mayor by this charter could be explained only by a legal antiquary: suffice it to say, they were about equal to those enjoyed by MacCallum More in his castle of Inverary.

The English Justinian—as the third Edward has been termed—thought, by granting these privileges, to make Queenborough a great commercial port; but he was mistaken. As soon as they acquired these boons, the mayor and burgesses sat down to enjoy them, and then commenced a petty squabbling as to who should individually reap the greatest benefit from them. At the same time, they carefully excluded *foreigners*—as they denominated persons born out of the liberties—from any share. Though from Edward, or at a subsequent period, Queenborough obtained the privilege of sending two members to parliament, the town did not improve. The petty squabbling continued till a few years ago, when the last oyster was dredged up out of the Swale, and the borough was L.17,000 in debt, with a poor-rate of 9s. in the pound.

Some of the old court-books of the borough are before us, and cause us to wonder as to the food eaten by the inhabitants in the olden time. Did they literally, as well as metaphorically speaking, live upon oysters alone?—for we find no crime so frequently punished as that of being 'a common butcher,' or 'a common baker of human bread.' Scolds, too, and *foreigners*, met with no mercy. One John Clarke was apprehended 'for being a Scotchman, as is supposed,' and on this mere suspicion, 'it is commanded that he be kept in safe custody.' But the mass of these records are an endless course of litigation concerning the rights of pasture; particularly something entitled 'surplus pasture,' which, as none of the privileged seem to know what it really meant, we may surely be excused from attempting to explain. Yet these were the prosperous days of Queenborough: we must now come to its decline and fall.

Under the date of 1799, about forty years before the

borough, after long litigation in the higher courts, fell into a hopeless state of insolvency, there appears in the parish-books, by order of the corporation, the following characteristic and ominous entry, which, as the herald, and partially the cause, in all probability, of the coming misfortunes, fully deserves a line to itself:

'No scooling to be paid.'

Forty shillings, only, was the yearly pittance doled to the schoolmaster; yet poor Queenborough, with its rich pasture and fishery, decreed 'no scooling to be paid.' We should mention here, also, that the borough derived considerable emolument from its privilege of returning two members to parliament. Hasted, the historian of Kent, writing in the last century, says: 'Queenborough consists of one principal wide street, containing about 150 houses. The principal source of wealth to it is the election for members of parliament, which secures to some of the chief inhabitants many lucrative places in the Ordnance and other branches of government.' In fact, it may be said that for many years the Board of Ordnance nominated the members for the borough. Whatever the original constitution of the borough may have been, the entire control of the property and expenditure of the corporation ultimately fell into the hands of seven persons—the mayor, four jurats, and two bailiffs, who elected each other as they thought proper. The mayor was elected by these persons writing the name of their choice on a piece of paper, which was folded up and given into the hands of the town-clerk, whose office had become almost hereditary. The town-clerk then went home, and opening the papers, announced the result of the election by sending the serjeant-at-mace with a goose to the house of the person who had the majority of votes! We are quoting from parliamentary blue-books,\* and, consequently, trust our readers will not think we are presuming to jest with them. The mayors were generally re-elected for considerable periods. One held office as long as twenty years; and as he was *ex officio* returning-officer for the borough, this practice was decidedly illegal. The burgesses had no voice in the management of the corporation affairs; and, being almost all employed in the oyster-fishery, termed themselves free-dredgers—though, in fact, they were little better than the serfs of the select seven, who formed the governing body.

The principal advantage of the oyster-fishery consisted in the possession of the Swale as a rearing and feeding ground for these popular shell-fish. Every spring, a quantity of the spat, or young brood, was purchased by the corporation, and deposited in the Swale, where, in the course of a few years, they grew to be marketable oysters of a peculiarly excellent flavour. A successional course of beds, of different aged oysters, were thus kept up, and a regular spring supply of spat was absolutely necessary to carry out the system. The free-dredgers were employed in depositing the spat and dredging up the oysters. The corporation sold the oysters, and allowed the dredgers a participation in the profits, in the shape of wages, varying in amount according to the prices obtainable at market, the favourable or adverse state of the weather, and the many other casualties ever attendant on a somewhat precarious speculation. The machinery of an irresponsible municipal corporation is little adapted to carry on a purely commercial undertaking. As no fund, even in the most prosperous seasons, was ever reserved for contingencies, and the yearly feast described by Taylor, and the seven annual dinners given by the mayor to the corporation magnates, were attended with considerable expense, it may readily be supposed that in some springs there was not sufficient

\* Reports from Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in England and Wales. 1835.—Report of the Commissioner on the Affairs of the Corporation of Queenborough. 1843.

money in hand to stock the beds. Money, then, had to be borrowed, on the security of the ensuing winter's fishing. This was a system very easy to begin, but very difficult to leave off; and so the corporation found it. From occasionally borrowing small sums at first, they at length were compelled, about 1815, to borrow from five to ten thousand pounds every spring, for the purpose of replenishing the oyster-beds; and from the legal expenses in preparing the bonds, and other causes, they seldom paid less than ten per cent. for the use of the money.

The free-dredgers, having a very high idea of their rights and privileges, never condescended to perform any other kind of labour; and, as their families increased in number, while the oysters decreased, the yearly interest payable for stocking the beds became a very heavy tax upon their earnings. In short, they fell into poverty; and as poverty begets discontent, they became rebellious to the select seven. The mayor, too, at this period, an active and energetic man, having great faith in the efficacy of the cart-whip and loaded pistols, inflamed rather than allayed the increasing discontent. Two parties were formed in the borough—the party of the governing body, and that of the free-dredgers. The only two public-houses in the place were the head-quarters of each. No dredger would enter or taste the beer of the corporation-house; while no corporation-man would enter or taste the beer of the dredgers-house. Though it was absolutely necessary, for the success of the fishery, that certain rules and by-laws should be observed, the dredgers resisted the regulations of the governing body, committing acts for the mere purposes of annoyance; while the select seven treated the dredgers in a most oppressive manner. When the dredgers locked up the select seven for a whole day in the town-hall—when a dredger challenged the mayor to a bout at fisticuffs—the governing body, instead of preferring indictments at the quarter-sessions, moved for criminal informations at the court of King's Bench, merely to distress and intimidate their opponents. The little money the dredgers had saved was soon expended in law-expenses; and then the governing body, after expending some thousands of pounds of the corporation-money in law-costs, made still more stringent by-laws, which debarred the most obnoxious of the dredgers from any employment at the fishery. After a seven years' continuous course of law-proceedings between the dredgers and the governing body, it may easily be supposed that the lawyers had prospered much better than the oyster-beds.

Such was the condition of affairs, and a severe winter had reduced the oppressed and contumacious dredgers to the most abject poverty, when they suddenly found a benevolent, yet not altogether disinterested friend. This gentleman established a soup-kitchen for their relief, supplied the women with petticoats and blankets, and the men with Guernsey-shirts. Beer once more was drawn and drank at the dredgers' pot-house; tobacco, latterly an unattainable luxury, was chewed and smoked; and, more mysterious still, smack-loads of dredgers were spirited away to London, where they were feasted with rare viands and rich wines, and introduced to men learned in the law, to whom they related their rights and their wrongs. Something evidently was in the wind; but the select seven rested in fancied security, little aware of the storm that was brewing. At last, a free-dredger brought an action at law against the governing body, to try their right of making the obnoxious by-laws. The dredger who brought this action, though previously in poverty, engaged, at three-hundred-guinea briefs, the sergeants most skilled in municipal law; and the Great Fishery Case, as the Kentish people termed it, came on at Maidstone assizes. More than a hundred dredgers appeared as witnesses on their side; but, being interested parties, their evidence

could not be received. The governing body, however, disfranchised their officers, so that they could give evidence, recompensing the disfranchised with a pension of a shilling a day for life, and enfranchising them again immediately after the trial. This was most certainly a twofold act of injustice, as it tended to corrupt the witnesses, and was an undue application of the corporation funds. Even the mayor was not above taking a pension of a shilling a day for life; and so often was he disfranchised and enfranchised, in a short period, for the purpose of giving evidence, that he was five times elected to the mayoralty in one year! The select body did not gain much by the disfranchising move, the counsel on both sides depending more on old charters and other documents, than *visd voce* evidence. The trial lasted three days; then the jury were locked up; and on the fourth gave their verdict, declaring the title of the corporation to the fishery to be affirmed, but their by-laws to be unreasonable.

The free-dredgers, accepting this as a verdict in their favour, returned in triumph to Queenborough. The next day, with colours flying, and amidst the firing of guns and an unlimited consumption of beer, they manned their boats, proceeded to the fishing-ground, caught some oysters, and eating them on the spot, thus, as they considered, took possession of and proved their lawful rights. Where the money came from to carry on this expensive trial on the dredgers' side, and to supply so many barrels of beer and pounds of tobacco, was a mystery soon to be solved. The money spent by the corporation on the action, of course came out of the fast-diminishing oyster-beds.

Shortly after the trial, a dissolution of parliament took place, and who was so fit to represent the free-dredgers as the benevolent gentleman who had so nobly befriended them! Accordingly, a deputation waited on him; was favourably received; and, for the first time during many years, the Ordnance interest in the borough met with opposition. The governing body were astounded; the number of voters were about 300, while the free-dredgers numbered 155; besides, many of the burgesses, who would have voted in the Ordnance interest, were snugly installed in its employment, and, consequently, being servants of the government, were ineligible as voters.

The select seven, however, were not inactive. Burgesses were made and unmade, and recourse was had to every electioneering trick that could be put in practice. At last the day of election came. The nominees of the Ordnance Board were proposed and seconded by the mayor and corporation; the benevolent gentleman by two free-dredgers, who also were dissenting preachers. The voters came to the poll but slowly. To the dismay of the benevolent gentleman and his agent, the free-dredgers were nowhere to be seen: they had rolled off some of the barrels of beer gratuitously supplied on such occasions, and having taken possession of an empty store-house, were deliberating, with closed doors, as to which of the candidates they should vote for. Here was gratitude; but, as one of the deliberators told us, 'every man has a right to do the best for himself.' The agent of the Ordnance interest first discovered where the dredgers had retired. He went, knocked at the door, was admitted, and offered certain reasons for their voting on his side; their reply was: 'We are no scholars, sir.' The agent of the benevolent gentleman next discovered where they were, and he also advanced sundry reasons; which, being considered valid, the dredgers marched up to the poll in a body, and the Ordnance interest received its first blow in Queenborough. We have asked the old free-dredger above referred to, wherein consisted the superiority between the reasons of the Ordnance agent and those of the agent of his benevolent friend; but his only reply was a wink and a grin, and that subsidence into stolid taciturnity so often met with among



people of his class. We have been told, however, that the reasons advanced by the Ordnance agent were merely pieces of paper, on which certain words and figures were impressed, but which the free-dredgers, not being able to read, could not clearly understand; whereas the reasons proffered by the more astute agent of the benevolent gentleman were round, yellow pieces of metal, whose validity were easily comprehensible to the most illiterate. As soon as the benevolent gentleman found himself in parliament, he brought in a bill to regulate the fishery, which the select seven spent a considerable sum in opposing. But another dissolution took place; another election followed, with a similar result; and then the besom of destruction, in the shape of the Reform Bill, swept Queenborough into schedule A, where, it is to be hoped, it will remain until it becomes the great commercial *entrepôt* Edward III. designed it to be.

In 1829, the mayor, who had ruled during the troubled period from 1815, died. This person invariably wore two watches, that he might never be mistaken in the correct time; he also, for the last seven years of his life, always carried a pair of loaded pistols, which he openly exhibited, avowing his intention to shoot any one who dared to molest him. Every person in Queenborough not too young, too old, or too feeble, attended his funeral. As the clergyman was reading the impressive burial-service of the English Church, when he came to the solemn words, 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' and the clerk, as is customary, was throwing a handful of earth into the grave, a shower of half-pence was flung in upon the coffin by part of the assembled crowd. To the inquiring look of the astounded clergyman, they cried out that the coppers were to pay the deceased mayor's passage to a place unmentionable to ears polite. That night the free-dredgers illuminated their houses, and smashed the windows of those who did not; while those who did not illuminate, retorted by smashing the windows of those who did. This riot—a practical commentary on the text, 'No scolding to be paid'—was another rare catch for the lawyers from the oyster-beds of Queenborough.

In 1830, the corporation were £20,000 in debt, £11,000 of which were law-expenses. They paid off the whole of this debt, but were unable to stock the oyster-beds that year. The following year, however, the beds were stocked; and in the five years from 1833 to 1838, the fishery yielded a gross revenue of £58,000. But the corporation and free-dredgers had so long enjoyed the expensive luxury of going to law, that it would seem as if they could not exist without it. In short, the lawyers were destined to swallow up the oysters, shells and all. In 1838, the corporation stocked the beds for the last time; and two years afterwards—being £12,000 in debt, and nobody inclined to lend them any more—they prepared for the impending insolvency by raising and selling the last remaining oysters; so, when the sheriff of Kent appeared upon the scene, there was nothing for him to seize and sell but the paraphernalia of the corporation—their books, mace, and cart-whip. The latter, so long the terror of mischievous sailors, and other evildoers, now lies, like a warrior taking his rest, on the library-shelf of a Kentish antiquary.

The creditors, then, had no other resource than to petition the legislature for its interference; and, accordingly, a commissioner was appointed to inquire into the affairs of the corporation. The commissioner found that the debt, with interest, amounted to nearly £17,000; and the result of his report was, that parliament, in 1844, passed an act, vesting the property and privileges of the borough in the hands of trustees, until its debts should be paid. This act at once restored peace to the conflicting parties in Queenborough, for they unanimously united to embarrass and

thwart the trustees as much as possible. The oyster-fishery was gone; but still there remained the time-honoured bone of contention, 'surplus pasturage,' to go to law about. So the debt is still £17,000, the trustees being compelled to expend £4,000 in law-costs, contending with the litigious people, whose mismanaged property they are endeavouring to improve. But as, by an act of last year's parliament, Queenborough Common has fallen into the possession of the Inclosure Commissioners, it is probable that the question of 'surplus pasturage' has at last been set to rest for ever. In conclusion, we need scarcely observe, that, like Sam Weller's friend, the Chancery prisoner in the Fleet, who was ruined by having an estate left to him, so Queenborough was prevented from rising in the world, and ultimately brought to utter ruin, through having been granted privileges.

#### LIMITED LIABILITY.

THE peculiar stringency of the law of partnership in the United Kingdom has, during the last twenty years, been a subject of frequent discussion and complaint. It was not to be expected that a principle of so great importance in our commercial jurisprudence should be hastily set aside; and up to a recent period, it was difficult to say whether its partisans or its opponents were of greater weight. The latter, however, have at length prevailed; and a measure has received the sanction of the legislature, which introduces, for the first time, the rule of limited liability as it is recognised in France, in the United States, and in various other countries. This innovation has been regarded with uneasiness, and even alarm, by one class of politicians, and with unbounded satisfaction by another. Experience will probably shew both that the fears of the one and the anticipations of the other have been greatly exaggerated. For our own part, we regard the measure in question as both a useful and a necessary one. It may not be productive of all the advantages anticipated from it; but we shall feel greatly surprised, on the other hand, should it lead to any of those disastrous results upon which its opponents love to dwell. We cannot suppose that any evils which may arise from the operation of the new law, can equal those which long experience has shewn to be inherent in the old.

The objections to the law of unlimited liability are of a twofold kind. In the first place, it operates with great severity upon individuals whom want of caution or ignorance may have induced to embark in commercial undertakings without ascertaining the extent of their responsibility; in the second, it presents a serious obstacle to the progress of invention, and to the formation of industrial associations among the middle and working classes. It may be said in reply to the first of these objections, that the law of partnership is so well known, that no one who voluntarily submits to its operation, has a right to complain of its rigour. Every person who shares in the profits of any commercial undertaking, be it great or small, is responsible to the public, to use the words of Lord-chancellor Eldon, 'to his last acre and his last shilling;' and such being the fixed unvarying rule of British law, we have ourselves to blame if we incur its sweeping penalties. All this is strictly true; and yet the severity of the law has failed to prevent the formation of myriads of bubble-companies, which in times past have spread distress and ruin through all classes of society. Nay, more, we have good reason for believing that this very severity has materially contributed to these disastrous results. This assertion may appear paradoxical at

first sight, but a little reflection will shew that it is not so in reality. Legislation not unfrequently aggravates the evils which it aims to cure; and that this has been the case with the law in question, is the deliberate opinion of many persons who have long and narrowly watched its effects.

A gentleman who, from his position as a judge of the Court of Bankruptcy in London, has had extensive experience in the investigation of the affairs of bubble-companies, lately furnished a committee of the House of Commons with a few instructive details as to the mode in which these associations are generally set afloat. The projectors being, for the most part, men of straw, without money or credit, must find at least one person who has both, before they can present their scheme to the public. Having caught their capitalist, they are enabled to commence operations without a moment's delay. They have only to persuade him to do some act which makes him a partner in the concern, and consequently responsible to his last shilling, and they immediately obtain credit in all quarters.

'If,' said the witness in question, Mr Commissioner Fane, 'the adventurers can get but one man of known substance to put down his name as a committee-man, under the delusive statement that he is not liable, the bubble is started, and the delusion set going. The needy adventurers want an office, but have no ready-money. Nobody will trust them. They then say: "Sir Thomas — has joined us." "Very well," says the landlord; "that will do:" and the office is obtained. They then go to the maker of brass-plates, then to the painter to paint the offices, then to the coal-merchant, then to the stationer, and lastly, to that most mischievous of creditors, the advertising-agent, by whose aid the project is floated. Each trusts Sir Thomas —; and the bubble has all the currency that boldness, falsehoods, a showy brass-plate, paint, and advertising can give it.' The witness added, that the effect of the law was to deter men of prudence and character from assisting in the promotion of any enterprise, however rational, and thus to leave the stage clear to adventurers and knaves, who, sometimes with the aid, as we have described, of one good name, and sometimes even without that, are enabled to deceive and plunder the public.

It may be said, that the individual who thus rashly lends his name to a scheme without sufficient forethought, ought to suffer the penalty of his folly. But there always have been knaves and dupes in the world, and the law of unlimited liability offers immense advantages to the former at the expense of the latter. A few penniless projectors have only to take advantage of the ignorance or the vanity, or it may be the benevolence of one person of substance, to enable them to ruin him, and plunder the public with impunity. It is thus that the severity of the law defeats its object, and instead of preventing fraud, directly encourages it.

But it is not only in the formation of bubble-companies that its evils are perceptible. The extraordinary facilities which it affords for obtaining credit, not unfrequently prove fatal to establishments which have started into existence with every prospect of success. The following example will explain our meaning:—A few years ago, a joint-stock bank in the north of England failed. Its liabilities were very large, and it involved in utter ruin hundreds of respectable individuals in the district where it was situated. The magnitude of the catastrophe, and the interest which it excited, led to a searching investigation, and its results were detailed to the same committee of the House of Commons to which we have already referred. It appeared that the managers of the concern had continued to borrow in the most reckless manner long after the capital had been lost, and when they knew that they were only plunging the shareholders deeper and deeper into debt and ruin.

How were they enabled to keep up for years this fatal delusion? Simply by the law of unlimited liability. The creditors, consisting chiefly of London capitalists, knew that the shareholders were ultimately responsible to them to their uttermost farthing; and they therefore advanced their money entirely upon the faith of the share-list. This was frankly admitted in the course of the investigation, for the true circumstances of the bank were perfectly well known in Lombard Street, but the creditors were aware that the law would protect them at the expense of the unfortunate shareholders.

A catastrophe of this kind, involving a vast amount of human misery, it is very clear, could not have occurred under a law of limited liability; and for this obvious reason, that credit would not have been extended to the bank beyond the exact amount for which the proprietors were responsible. So much for the positive evils attendant upon what we may now call the late law. Let us next glance at those of a negative description.

It has been long contended by the opponents of unlimited liability, that it tends, in various ways, to impede the progress of social improvement. To take a familiar instance: we will suppose that a valuable mechanical discovery has been made by a poor man—and such discoveries have generally been made by poor men. We will further suppose that a certain amount of capital is required to render it available, and that he desires to form a public company for this purpose. Full of confidence and hope, he prints his prospectus, and solicits patrons among the rich and great. They applaud his skill, predict his certain success; but they positively refuse to share in the risk of his scheme, because they cannot do so without placing their entire fortune in jeopardy. They might be disposed to venture a hundred or two; but what sane man would stake his entire substance upon an untried experiment? The disappointed inventor, meanwhile, finding that the rich will not aid him, seeks counsel of the needy and the discontented. In that case, one of two things generally happens: his discovery is either lost for want of means to make it known, or it is purchased from him for a trifle by some heartless speculator, who perceives a mode of turning to account the distresses of the despairing man of genius.

That this is no imaginary picture, every one at all acquainted with the history of patent inventions in this country, and more especially in the metropolis, can testify. 'In the course of my professional life as a commissioner of the Court of Bankruptcy,' says Mr Fane, 'I have learned that the most unfortunate man in the world is an inventor. The difficulty which he finds in getting at capital, involves him in all sorts of embarrassments; and he ultimately is, for the most part, a ruined man, and somebody else gets possession of his invention.' It cannot, surely, be a wise law which leads to such results; nor is it a sufficient defence to state that, in spite of the obstacles thus interposed, we have made great and continued progress in the arts. We know the discoveries that we have made; but who can tell those that we have lost through the difficulties we have attempted to describe? In France and in America, no such obstacles exist to the progress of invention. The ingenious workman who, in either of these countries, hits upon a useful discovery, is not debarred by an arbitrary law from reaping the fruits of his industry; and to this circumstance the superiority of the French in many branches of manufacture, and of the Americans in mechanical skill, has of late years been frequently ascribed. The recent alteration of the law in this country will soon enable us to test the truth of this opinion.

It has, moreover, been alleged that the law of unlimited liability has proved an insuperable obstacle to the formation of associations which are calculated to improve the health and the morals of the community

at large. Sanitary reform is a movement of recent growth, but its progress has been rapid. It dates from the first appearance of cholera in this country, some twenty-three years back, and from that time till the present the condition of our great towns has been steadily improving. In London, the erection of model lodging-houses, and of public baths for the working-classes, has been attended with excellent results; but the law has operated as a serious check upon the formation of such establishments. The reason of this is obvious. There are thousands of benevolent persons who would gladly aid in the promotion of such schemes, but who are not prepared to risk their whole fortune in carrying them out. When they have contributed to such institutions, they have generally, therefore, done so by direct gifts, in order to avoid the possible penalties of the law. It is impossible to doubt that innumerable social improvements have in this way been checked. We have mentioned two, but it would be easy to cite many more. A village or small country-town may have required a supply of water, or a gaswork—or a harbour, if situated on the sea-coast, and it has not the means of obtaining a charter. The wealthy residents in the neighbourhood may have expressed their cordial approval of the plan, but they are too prudent, while the inhabitants are too poor, to embark in it, and the good work remains accordingly undone. The latter, meanwhile, are compelled to drink bad water, to forego the luxury of gas, or the advantage of a secure harbour, because the law says that a man must venture all or nothing in any joint-stock enterprise in which he chooses to engage.

Such are the most prominent evils attendant upon the law of unlimited liability. But, in addition to these, it has tended to create feelings of envy and distrust between the richer and the poorer classes; for it clearly affords advantages to the one which it denies to the other. It clearly favours the large capitalist at the expense of the small; and it has therefore widened the broad line of demarcation between the higher and the lower orders, which, all who desire the stability and safety of the social structure, must wish to see, as far as possible, effaced. It is by the alliance of capital with talent and labour that nearly all modern improvements have been effected; but the law in question has said that such combination shall not exist except under certain difficult conditions unknown in other commercial countries. In America the 'special partner,' and in France the partner '*en commandite*,' enjoy all the advantages of association, without the terrible risks hitherto incurred in the United Kingdom. The testimony of innumerable witnesses has proved that this modification of the law has been attended in those countries with the happiest results. We are now about to follow the example of our neighbours, and we have no fear of the consequences.

One positive benefit, though of an indirect kind, will, we believe, arise from allowing the working-classes to throw their small funds with safety into mercantile speculations: it will form an inducement to them to save. Storing up spare gains in a bank is a slow way of advancement, and does not stimulate hope. Being a shareholder in a mercantile concern will excite hope, confirm economic habits, and give the workers the *morale* which is usually found connected with a sense of property.

Our readers are aware that, in the first instance, two separate measures were introduced by the government with reference to this subject. The one was, in fact, applicable to public, and the other to private partnerships, and it is the first of these only which has as yet received the sanction of the legislature. The consideration of the latter has been postponed until next year. The provisions of the measure which is now law are few and simple. It empowers any twenty-five persons to form themselves into a joint-stock company

with limited liability, provided the terms of registration prescribed by the act are duly complied with. The number of shareholders may of course exceed, but it must not fall short of that specified. There is no limit as to the capital to be raised by the association. It may consist of hundreds or of millions of pounds. A clause is added to the act, by means of which existing joint-stock companies are enabled to avail themselves of the privilege of limiting their liabilities by the same means as those prescribed for the new companies. The effect of this very important alteration of the law will probably be to call into existence a number of small associations which formerly would never have been thought of. Some of these, we must expect to be of a visionary and unsubstantial character; but with the knowledge that the liability of the shareholders is limited, it is not likely that such undertakings will obtain much credit with the public. Upon the whole, we are induced to believe that the new law will tend materially to discourage reckless speculation. At first, we may look for much activity among the projectors of new schemes; but the excitement of novelty will soon wear out, and in the end, public companies, both great and small, will be taught prudence by necessity. They will find it impossible to plunge into debt, as hitherto, at the expense of their shareholders; and for this substantial reason—that, with limited liability, they will only be enabled to maintain a limited amount of credit.

The measure applicable to private partnerships, which has been postponed until next session, is perhaps of still greater importance than that which relates to public companies. At present, no one can share, to the smallest extent, in the profits of any mercantile establishment in the kingdom, without rendering himself liable for its debts to the full extent of his means. In other commercial countries, it is a frequent practice among wealthy capitalists, to advance a certain sum of money to a young man commencing business, on the understanding that they are to share in the profits of the concern. Nothing can be more equitable than a partnership of this kind: capital is supplied on the one side, character and skill on the other. It is on the faith of the latter that the rich man advances his money, limiting precisely the amount for which he is responsible; and by means of such timely aid, the road to independence is opened up to the youthful partner. In England and in Scotland, no such facilities exist. A young man may indeed obtain a loan, for the purpose of enabling him to commence business; but to trade solely upon borrowed money, is at best a hazardous experiment. There was a witness of great intelligence examined before the Parliamentary Committee to which we have already more than once referred, who pointed out very clearly the distinction between the young tradesman who borrowed, and the one who was backed by a partner of known respectability. 'A young man,' he said, 'beginning entirely with borrowed capital, according to the rules of our trade, is entitled to no credit. He is a dangerous customer, if he borrows money which can be called from him at any time when the lender begins to be fearful, or when, for his own purposes, he requires it; whereas, if the lender becomes a partner *en commandite*, he fixes it there for a specific period; he cannot withdraw it; and that capital is absolutely liable to the creditors who trust him: whereas the borrowed money would not be liable, and in the event of failure, would be proved as a debt on the estate, in diminution of the dividend.' The witness, who was a partner in one of the largest retail establishments in the kingdom—Everington's & Co. of Ludgate Hill—added, that he had seen many opportunities when he would have gladly assisted young men of skill and character, but that the present law had deterred him.

We trust that this will soon be the case no longer;



and that at least before another twelvemonth elapses, we shall have followed the example of our neighbours in smoothing the path of industry to all classes of society.

## TRACINGS OF ICELAND AND THE FARÖE ISLANDS.

### REIKIAVIK.

AFTER the *Thor* had dropped anchor in Reikiavik Bay, the first thing to be attended to was the landing of the governor, Count Trampe, in whom all of us British passengers now felt the warmest and most friendly interest, on account of his amiable deportment during the week we had spent together. He proceeded to the shore by himself in a fully-manned boat, and was honourably received at one of the landing-jetties which serve instead of pier or mole in the insular capital. Our sympathies followed him to his home, where a wife and numerous family were waiting to give him an affectionate reception. It is customary for an Icelandic governor to serve in that capacity for five years; and as the salary is moderate (under £400 sterling), and the place is considered as a kind of banishment, one who has served the full term is usually held as entitled to some higher mark of government favour in consequence. The worthy count has served about four years under circumstances of considerable difficulty as regards politics, and with great inconvenience to his rising family; so we all hoped most eagerly that the day of compensation was not far distant.

The next consideration was as to our own proceedings. There being no hotel in Reikiavik, nor any better place of entertainment than a tavern, it seemed unavoidable that we should spend the night on board the ship. We might, however, go ashore for the remainder of the afternoon, and amuse ourselves by examining the town and its neighbourhood. While we should be thus engaged, the captain undertook to make arrangements for our proposed excursion to the Geysers, in which he himself and three of his officers were resolved to accompany us. This journey, we learned, was likely to be the only one of any moment we could undertake in Iceland, as it would occupy pretty nearly all the time the *Thor* was able to wait in the island. It was already certain that the needful preparations would occupy the whole of the next day.

Eager and excited—not very different from a set of school-boys getting a holiday—we left the vessel, and broke ashore. The black shingle which first met our eyes in landing, supported our associations regarding this volcanic spot of earth. The town and its inhabitants scarcely did so—they were not sufficiently rude. What we chiefly saw at first was a row of goodly wooden buildings, mostly warehouses, fronting to the bay, with other rows behind and intersecting—all very neat and clean-looking. There were clusters of rude fisher-like people at the jetties and the corners of streets, and masculine female figures engaged in cutting up fish on the black rocks near by; but we also saw some respectably dressed people going about, no way differing from what might be seen in a third-rate town in England. Somewhat detached from the streets, were a good modern church, a long building serving as a college, and a neat plain mansion occupied by the governor. The only part of the town where any extraordinary rudeness prevailed, was the suburb occupied by the fishermen. There the houses were mere sod-covered hovels, exemplifying the style which we afterwards found to be generally prevalent in Iceland. The truth is, that Reikiavik, apart from the fishing part of the population, is not much of an Icelandic town. Its principal inhabitants are merchants and

public officials, most of whom are from Denmark or other countries. It contains in all about 800 souls.

Our confinement for several days at sea having made us desirous of exercise, we did not stop long in the town on this occasion, but right soon set out for a walk in the country, keeping to the eastward, and near the sea-shore. We found ourselves at once transferred to a wilderness, where the ground was composed of bare dolerite, encumbered with blocks of the same rock; and nothing else anywhere to be seen but interstices filled with red earth, and here and there a patch of peat-moss. A place so devoid of vegetation is rare on the face of the earth. The only spot in my own country which I can recollect as presenting features approaching to it in hopeless desolation, is Drumshorling Muir, near Aberdeen. Such of our party, however, as possessed any knowledge of geology, found even this dreary scene not devoid of interest. It became at once evident that the country near Reikiavik had—as I must say is the case with Drumshorling Muir—taken its form and character from ancient ice. The rounded forms of the eminences and the perched blocks betrayed this before we discovered any more expressive glacial markings. When we by and by observed these in several places (the stria pointing from N. 30° W., when 43° are allowed for variation of the compass), the proof of the fact was complete. So far as I am aware, this was the first time that traces of ancient glacial action have been observed in Iceland.

Four of our party, having amongst them a couple of fishing-rods, adventured about four miles across the rocky country—a most toilsome march it must have been—in order to try their fortune in a river called Laxa or Lax-elv, which, as its name imports, is noted for salmon. They returned to the vessel after midnight, and next morning reported to us a degree of success which—communicated in these pages—may possibly send a dozen yachts to Iceland next summer. In the portion of the river within a mile of the sea, they had found an abundance of large trout, three pounds-weight and upwards, and had actually killed in an hour or two no fewer than eighteen such fish. We had them at breakfast, and found them delicious. The river is leased for salmon-fishing under mercantile views by Mr Thomsen, a merchant in Reikiavik, who has a small lodge on the ground. Mr Thomsen, being there at the time, came up to our friends on seeing them commence their sport, and very politely gave them leave to fish for trout. To any couple or trio of English gentlemen, who find the true Waltonian pleasure in angling, I can imagine no greater treat than might be obtained during a summer month spent on the Lax-elv, under the sanction of Mr Thomsen.

During this day, while preparations were making for our excursion to the Geysers, we saw what was to be seen in Reikiavik, and formed an acquaintance with some of its inhabitants. I was fortunate enough to fall in with Mr Sivartson, a retired merchant, who speaks English, and who seemed to feel a pleasure in putting himself at our service. When, after a little conversation, I learned that he had, in youth, forty-five years ago, acted the same friendly part towards Sir George Mackenzie, and had subsequently visited Sir George in Edinburgh, a common ground of feeling was at once established between us, as I was able to inform him that I had also known that amiable and intelligent gentleman, and was indeed concerned in publishing a second edition of his *Travels in Iceland*. In this book, Mr Sivartson is very kindly spoken of as a young man who, in the absence of his father, took on himself the duty of entertaining Sir George and his companions at Havneford, where the family then resided. Now—alas for the changes—that fleeting time procureth!

The first place we went to was the church, or rather cathedral—for it is the church of the bishop of Iceland

—a handsome modern building, at the back of the town. We found the interior very neat, and even in some degree elegant, with galleries, an organ, and a tolerable painting over the communion-table. The object, however, which gives this church its chief attraction in the eyes of strangers, is a baptismal-font carved by Thorvaldsen, and which he presented to Iceland under a feeling for it as the country of his ancestors—his father having been a native of this island. This beautiful work of art is in the form of a low square obelisk, having in front a representation of the baptism of Christ; on the left, one of the Virgin and Child, with the infant Baptist at her knee; and on the right, Christ blessing the children; while on the back is a group of angels, surmounting the legend, *Opus hæc Roma fecit, et Islandiæ, terræ sibi gentiliacæ, pietatis causâ, donavit Albertus Thorvaldsen, anno MDCCCXXVII.* In the vestry, we were shewn the fine silk vestments of the bishop and other priests, including one with superb decorations which had been sent to the bishop so long ago as the early part of the sixteenth century by Pope Julius II. This was the same holy father to whom James IV. of Scotland was indebted for the grand sword of state which still figures amongst our national regalia. It was interesting to trace, in the ornaments of this robe, the same style of workmanship which is to be observed in the sword.

In a well-lighted apartment, under the roof of the church, is kept the public library of Reikiavik, consisting of two or three thousand books, Danish, Icelandic, and English, many of them being presents sent from a distance. I could not find any remarkable old books or manuscripts in this establishment; it seemed to be chiefly designed for popular use. The inhabitants of the town are allowed to have books from it for a dollar (2s. 3d.) each per annum, and about sixty take advantage of the privilege. I observed several of Mr Dickens's novels, some of Marryat's, a copy of Hume and Smollett, two of Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, and some of the publications of the United States' government.

We next went to see the school, which is a long goodly building situated on a slope to the east of the town. To find, in an island of 200 miles in linear extent, and containing 60,000 inhabitants, strictly speaking, but one public seat of education of any kind, is somewhat startling to a stranger. Such is the fact. There is not, and never has been, one juvenile seminary in Iceland, and this simply because the population is too scattered to admit of any such arrangement. The father teaches his children by the winter fireside; they teach their children again; and such is the only education which the bulk of the people obtain. Strange to say, they all read, and have, generally speaking, a taste for reading; and few English or Scotchmen write so neatly as these islanders do. The school at Reikiavik is an establishment for advancing the education of a select number of the youth of Iceland. About sixty lads between the ages of fourteen and eighteen attend it, most of them having a view to the learned professions. It is, however, only a kind of gymnasium or academy; and those who desire the special instructions fitting them to be priests, lawyers, or medical men, must pass to the university of Copenhagen. I found a suite of good class-rooms for the various branches, the Danish, French, and English languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, natural history, &c.; a set of dormitories for a certain number of the pupils—the rest living with friends in the town—and cabinets containing minerals and zoological specimens. The whole establishment seemed to be satisfactory in every respect but that of ventilation. The superintending rector, Mr Jonson, is obviously a man of vigorous intellect and good acquirements. As the establishment is supported by the Danish government, no fees are charged; and it of course becomes necessary to admit

to it only such youth as can give assurance of turning its instructions to good account.

The zealous cultivation of literature in Iceland during the last six centuries, and its remarkable productions, the sagas and eddas—histories and romantic poems—have excited the interest of all visitors. I am free to own that I can form no image of literary life more touching, or more calculated to call forth respect and veneration, than that of such a man as the Icelandic priest Thorlakson, who produced a beautiful translation of *Paradise Lost*, and many original works of distinguished merit, in the small inner room of a mere cottage which formed his parsonage, while his family concerns were going on in an equally small outer apartment, and his entire annual income did not exceed what is often given in England for the writing of an article in a magazine. Inquiry regarding the present state of literature in Iceland was a matter of course. So far as I could learn, the love of letters is still a more vivid passion in Iceland than the circumstances of the country would lead one to expect. I had much pleasure in looking over Mr Thordarson's printing-office in Reikiavik, where I found two presses of improved construction, and saw in progress an Icelandic translation of the *Odyssey* by Mr Egilsson, late president of the college, whose son, I was told, is also giving promise of being a good poet. The list of books printed and published by Mr Thordarson would surprise any one who thinks only of Iceland as a rude country half buried in arctic snows. He is also the publisher of two out of the three native newspapers produced in Iceland—the *Ingolfur*, and *Thiodolfur*. An Iceland newspaper, I may remark, is a small quarto sheet, like the English newspapers of the seventeenth century, produced at irregular intervals, and sometimes consisting of two, sometimes of four leaves, according as the abundance of intelligence may determine. In a country where there are no roads and no posts, that there should be newspapers of any kind, is gratifying. I regret, however, to say that they are described as of a violent malcontent complexion.

In the evening, there was a ball at the governor's house, for the entertainment of the officers and passengers of the *Thor*. I went, full of curiosity regarding the social life of this remote part of the world, and in hope of seeing some of the picturesque female costumes which are depicted in the works of Icelandic travellers. The governor's house is a long building of two stories, the lower containing a suite of three apartments, neatly furnished. The count, in his uniform, and his countess, an elegant woman scarcely past the bloom of life, received the company with much kindness. Two or three stripling sons, and one or two of less ripe age, were present. As we approached the house, we observed groups of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, some of the latter in uniforms, making their way under umbrellas along the streets, there being no sort of vehicle to carry about the gay in this part of the earth. The scene reminded me of what I have often witnessed among the beau-monde of a Scotch university town, where, vehicles being nearly as completely wanting, ladies are fain to turn up the skirts of their gowns and cover their heads with bongraces, while trooping along under the rain to a party. I was disappointed, however, of seeing any ladies in the costume once peculiar to Iceland. It is now only to be seen upon a few elderly ladies living in remote country situations. The ladies who attended this ball were all well dressed in the French or English fashion; many of them in white muslin, others in silk. It struck me that an unusually large proportion of them were little women. As is customary in the north of Europe generally, the ladies assembled in a room by themselves; and it was not till a large portion of the company had arrived, and coffee had been handed about, that a pair of folding-doors were thrown open,



and the gentlemen were admitted to ask partners for dancing. Music being furnished by a servant from a Parisian hand-organ of superior construction, which stood in a corner of the room, dancing began, and was kept up for several hours with unflagging spirit, even by those who had next day to commence the long and fatiguing journey to the Geysers. The polka was the almost sole kind of dance practised, and, by a custom of the country, the ladies as often asked the gentlemen as the gentlemen the ladies.

#### THE BLIND HARPIST.

Not such a very long time ago—but when there were no railways, when steam-navigation was in its infancy, and the electric telegraph not even dreamed of—a journey to Cornwall was quite a formidable undertaking; while the native inhabitants of that county regarded the more distant portion of the island population in the light of foreigners. Fluctuations, however, were as rife then, in mining concerns, as they are known to be in these adventurous days—fortunes were made, and fortunes were lost; and when the latter reverse befell Mr Traher, a great mining speculator, attended with many distressing circumstances, he had not strength of mind to bear up against calamity, but speedily sank beneath the blow, leaving three orphan children totally destitute. Harry, the eldest, a youth just about to leave school, obtained, through the influence of friends, an appointment in a mercantile house in India, whither he at once repaired. His sisters were considered particularly in luck's way, when a distant relation, respectfully settled in London, offered to receive the poor girls, and to retain one of them as nursery-governess in her own family, providing a similar situation for the other. It was a sad parting between the brother and sisters; for India then seemed a vast deal further off than it appears now, and faint were the hopes they entertained of meeting again in this world. And, indeed, these three never did meet again; for Mary, the eldest of the two girls, in process of time became the wife of a thriving London merchant, and died while their only daughter was still a child. Ethel Traher, Harry's favourite little sister, also became a wife; but her marriage displeased her relation, who pronounced her positive conviction, that so pretty a creature might have done far better. Mary—or Mrs Danvers, as she ought to be called—more than joined in the displeasure occasioned by Ethel's matrimonial choice; and not only cherished anger and unforgiveness in her own breast, but instilled the same feelings into the mind of her husband, and even taught her child to look down on 'the Mordaunts.' Letters from Harry were few and far between; but he was prospering; though fortunes in India, he said, were not made so quickly as they sometimes were in their own dear native Cornwall.

For some years, Mr Mordaunt, Ethel's husband, who turned his talents to account by teaching drawing, contrived, by dint of unceasing industry, to support his delicate and ailing wife in comfort, if not in affluence. Ethel also brought her husband one child, a fair daughter, named after herself, whose sweet affectionate disposition endeared her to both parents' hearts, and made amends to her mother for the loss of a sister's countenance and love. With deep emotion, however, Mrs Mordaunt read in the public prints the announcement of this unforgiving sister's decease: she yearned to clasp the motherless girl, her niece and Etty's cousin, to her bosom. But so decided had been the rebuffs of Mr Danvers, that honest pride and self-respect would not permit one of the family to approach the rich man's door. Miss Danvers reigned supreme there, the spoiled child of luxury and indulgence—proud, arrogant, and unfeeling, but strikingly handsome in person and agreeable in manner. She did not even know where the Mordaunts were to be found—she made

it a matter of conscience to cut all such disgraceful connections, and the more particularly as they were resident in the same city.

Since the death of Mrs Danvers, Harry had not written home: long illness might account for this, press of business, or the inertness occasioned by the climate; or, it might be, that no longer having his own sisters to correspond with, absence caused forgetfulness, and he did not care to see the handwriting of the new generation. Hence the name of 'Uncle Harry' was seldom mentioned, either by the dashing Miss Danvers, or by the quiet pale girl Etty Mordaunt, whose young life was passed in tending her now afflicted mother. Ere middle age had dimmed the lustre of her eyes, or changed a single dark hair to white, poor Mrs Mordaunt lost the use of her limbs through paralysis, and Etty saw the sunshine of this world through the haze of a sick-room. Yet had they much to be thankful for; and a contented happy family they were. They rented the upper part of a small house in a genteel street; and Mr Mordaunt's pupils were principally in the vicinity, with the exception of some schools in the suburbs. His emolument was certain and regular; and although he had frequently complained of a singular weakness in his eyes, attended by some pain, no serious apprehension of danger had disturbed the drawing-master's serenity of mind. All his leisure time was devoted to the improvement of Etty's docile mind: she learned everything readily save drawing—that she could not manage; and her father, half in jest, half in earnest, shook his head, and called it a 'deficiency of intellect;' and Etty herself, the gentlest and most humble-minded of human beings, lamented this 'deficiency,' because it vexed her dear father. But, as if to make amends for the want she deplored, nature had gifted Etty with a remarkably fine voice—thrilling, rich, and melancholy. A harp, which was her poor mother's only relic of better days, stood in one corner of their sitting-room; and not only had Etty learned to accompany her voice on this old harp very respectably, but Mr Mordaunt also was a performer; and what with his brilliant touch and Etty's sweet warbling, these humble family concerts were quite delightful.

Mr Mordaunt had never hitherto consented to receive pupils at his own home, not liking this infringement of domestic privacy; but, on the urgent solicitation of a former pupil, who had materially benefited by his instructions, Mr Mordaunt wavered his objection, and gave a few lessons, always in the evening, to a young man whose peculiar circumstances prevented the reception of a master in his father's dwelling. This youth was the second son of Mr Rutherford, the senior partner of Mr Danvers. Mr Rutherford was not only a keen man of business, but so miserly in his habits and pursuits, that although he had but two motherless sons, and had already amassed an immense fortune, he grudged them all participation in the pleasures and luxuries of life, and kept them chained to the desk from morning till night. This kind of plodding existence suited well with the disposition and habits of the elder brother, who resembled his father in all respects; but Herbert, the younger brother, was of a higher character, and although a dutiful son, and tolerably steady and industrious, he felt bitterly the want of a happy home.

At the house of Mr Danvers, their father's partner, both young men always found a cordial welcome; indeed, it was the first wish of Mr Danvers's heart to see his only daughter united to John Rutherford, whose talents for business and money-making rendered him so very desirable as a partner for life. John had no objection to the young lady: she was much the same to him as young ladies in general; and he thought it would be a good plan thus to cement the union of the firm of Rutherford, Danvers, & Co.

Laura Danvers, however, had a strong will of her own; and although she would willingly have changed her name to Rutherford, it was not as 'Mrs John,' but as 'Mrs Herbert.' But although Herbert Rutherford bestowed the full meed of admiration on the beautiful Laura, as gallantry demanded, his heart continued untouched, and his fancy uncaptivated. There was a vein of deep feeling and romance in Herbert's nature, concealed beneath a reserved exterior, which required to be aroused by a far different nature than that of Laura Danvers. Since he had left school, his taste for drawing had been uncultivated; but on seeing the progress made by his friend under Mr Mordaunt's auspices, the slumbering taste revived, and Herbert succeeded in persuading Mr Mordaunt to grant him a small portion of time, snatched from the hours of domestic leisure. Mr Rutherford, sympathising in no intellectual culture or accomplishment, would have scouted the idea of a drawing-master for 'the grown-up boy Master Herbert,' and certainly would have grudged the cost of lessons. Hence the permission given to Herbert by Mr Mordaunt, of a weekly visit to his private retreat, where the presence of the wife and daughter was no hindrance to study, their silence, while Etty pursued her occupation of needle-work, remaining on these occasions unbroken. After the first slight introduction, Herbert instinctively felt that no approach to a more familiar footing would be permitted by Mr Mordaunt or the ladies; his presence was a check to social intercourse; Etty demurely composed herself to fulfil an appointed task, like a girl in school-hours; and Mrs Mordaunt was absorbed with a book. Nevertheless, Etty soon ascertained that the young stranger was good-looking, and had a very agreeable voice when addressing her father; nay, she learned the colour of his eyes, and thought them the most penetrating and expressive dark eyes in the world. Herbert also, though busied from the moment of his entrance with the single purpose for which he was there, yet found opportunity to remark the graceful outline of the tall slight form, ever bending over needle-work; and to detect the fact, that Etty's eyes were of the softest loveliest violet colour, shaded by silken fringes; and that in Etty's long golden ringlets a kind of sunshine seemed to linger, though little of sunshine ever penetrated the close atmosphere she inhaled. Herbert, being a quick observer, remarked also the old harp in the corner, and the flowers tastefully disposed in baskets; he saw, too, how often Mrs Mordaunt's glance was earnestly and anxiously fixed on her daughter, when she seemed to be engaged with the page open before her.

These drawing-lessons had continued without interruption for some weeks, and Herbert frequently looked in at Mr Danvers's, but without mentioning the progress he was making in art—and of course the name of Mordaunt was never mentioned there—when the drawing-master's increased weakness of sight obliged him to give up several of his pupils, Herbert among the number. Vainly the young man strove to find some pretext for continuing his visits at more distant intervals: all his friendly overtures were received so coldly by Mr Mordaunt, who was a proud man in his way, that Herbert dared not persist, fearing to wound the feelings he so much respected. He thought of the sick mother, and the sweet devoted Etty, both dependent on one whose affliction might eventually incapacitate him from working to support these dear and feeble beings. But Herbert was a stranger, and Mr Mordaunt was not a man to encourage or foster the sympathy, of whose outward expression only he felt sure.

It seemed, indeed, as if fate was adverse to Herbert's wish to be on more friendly or intimate terms with his former master; for after an interval of time had elapsed, which to the young man appeared considerable,

on calling at the door one day to inquire after the health of the family, he found they had removed, and no one could afford him the slightest clue to their present whereabouts.

'I'm afeard,' said the fat landlady, 'that the poor gen'l'm will get into great distress, though he owed me nothing, and always paid me reg'lar as clockwork. But he was too honest to stay where he couldn't see his way clear, poor gen'l'm; and I don't much think he'll see his way clear for long, anyhow; for his eyes failed him utter-ly afore he went; and that failure of his blessed eyes was the cause of his leaving these elegant apartments, because he were obleeged to give up his pupils. And I don't know what they will do, that I don't; for Missis Mordaunt was helpless, and Miss Etty just like one of the lilies she were so fond of nursing—easily broke down, I should say, by a angry wind. Howsumever, I'm very sorry for them; but we've all troubles of our own, and I've my share, I assure you, sir; and you look as if you hadn't been without your own share, too, sir, though you haven't seen so many years by half as I have.'

Herbert sighed as he turned away from the quiet street, after making several fruitless inquiries concerning the objects of his interest. Sight failed, and pupils given up!—what would become of them? Where had the poor family gone to hide their distress from the gaze of the world? That sweet, gentle, loving young girl—that pale, sinking mother—the silent, uncomplaining father and husband, whose every glance towards those dependent creatures bespoke deep affection and tenderness? Oh, it was deplorable; and Herbert determined to persevere in his search, and to assist them as far as he was able, for Mr Mordaunt must permit him to be a friend now. But the former pupils, of whom Herbert knew sufficient to hazard inquiries, could give him no intelligence of Mr Mordaunt's movements: they only knew his loss of sight had deprived them of an able master; and they concerned themselves no more about the matter, except by saying that it was a heavy calamity to befall so good and industrious a man.

For many months, Herbert Rutherford had visited at the house of Mr Danvers more rarely than of yore; Miss Danvers smilingly upbraiding him for his absence, but welcoming him charmingly when he came. Her father had heard from Uncle Harry, who had returned to England with an enormous fortune, and who was coming to visit them, after the chagrin and disappointment he had experienced in Cornwall from finding all his friends and relations dispersed or dead.

'I understood, or imagined,' said Herbert, 'that you were Mr Traher's only near living relative, Miss Danvers?'

Miss Danvers blushed scarlet at this simple remark, so innocently made by the speaker, and replied in some confusion: 'Oh, I believe we have relations who came from Cornwall; but I suppose they are dead or abroad, as we know nothing of them. But I've always heard Uncle Harry was a true Cornishman, in his local attachments; but I hope we may succeed in reconciling him to remain amongst us, poor lonely old man!'

'Poor lonely old man!' thought Herbert, with a suppressed smile; 'rich lonely old man, or he would not be welcome here!'

John Rutherford's attentions to the beautiful Miss Danvers had become more marked and assiduous since Uncle Harry's arrival in his native land. Miss Danvers was the nabob's nearest, nay, probably, his only living known relative, and it was high time to secure the hand of his niece. But John was prudent, and liked to feel his way, until the time seemed ripe for the experiment; so he contented himself by paying his devoirs attentively to the lady of his love, and by redoubled energy and perseverance in business, to win the favour and approval of Mr Danvers. Herbert, on

the contrary, had been absent and indolent of late—careless about ledgers, and incorrect in calculations of importance. The image of the young sweet girl and her suffering mother absolutely haunted him: what could have become of them when the bread-winner was struck down? Etty's pensive loveliness had made, indeed, a deep and lasting impression on the young man's fancy; and those evenings devoted to the drawing-lessons—although no words were spoken between them—were recalled as the most cherished memories of his heart.

Uncle Harry was received by Mr Danvers and Laura with the empressement due to a bachelor Indian relative with lacs of rupees at his disposal; but Uncle Harry was fidgety and ill at ease, and almost his first question was about poor Ethel. He had been to their native place in the hope of finding her; and he could scarcely believe it possible that Mr Danvers and Laura knew not where she was. They spoke of disgrace and vexation, and hinted their certainty that Mrs Mordaunt must be dead; or no doubt, if otherwise, *they* would have been applied to long ago. Poor relations who had behaved shamefully always found out rich ones, and never ceased pestering them with begging-letters.

'I think you may rest satisfied, Uncle Harry,' said Miss Danvers, 'that my late mother's sister is no more; for, depend upon it, if she had left children, or had herself lived (for of course they were poor), we should have heard from them quickly enough.'

But Uncle Harry did *not* rest satisfied even with this lucid explanation given by his beautiful niece; and, moreover, the sallow but healthy nabob quietly informed Mr Danvers, that he thought it would be as well to insert an advertisement in a leading paper, in order to discover poor Ethel, either dead or alive. It was monstrous, suggested Mr Danvers, absolutely monstrous, to make the thing so public; but remonstrance was vain, for Uncle Harry was obstinate, and might not be offended with impunity; so the utmost Mr Danvers and Laura could effect, was to persuade him to wait for a few days, when, meantime, private inquiries should be set on foot.

Mr Traher was in a hurry to return to Cornwall; he had determined on purchasing an estate there, and settling down for the remainder of his days. He detested London, and seemed quite proof against all the blandishments lavished on him by the beautiful Laura. He did not say how unnatural he thought them all, for deserting poor Ethel, but he looked and acted it; and Miss Danvers could scarcely conceal her spite and indignation—her only hope being in the belief that Mrs Mordaunt had really passed away from the face of the earth. But, worse than all, this tiresome, fidgety Uncle Harry had spoken of the poor Mordaunts before Herbert; and Herbert had started and blushed, and seemed so confused and interested in the subject, that Miss Danvers attributed the start to surprise—for she well remembered having led Herbert to suppose no very near relations existed to share Mr Traher's affection or money. Yet Miss Danvers well knew that Herbert Rutherford was no mercenary, and cared little for wealth or its allurements; and she was puzzled as to what the strong interest was attributable which Herbert displayed concerning these 'odious people.' Mr Traher seemed more pleased with the young man than with any one or anything in Mr Danvers's house; and the avowal which Herbert made to him, as they were walking out together, of his own acquaintance with the Mordaunts, more closely cemented the bond of union between them. Herbert dwelt on Mr Mordaunt's excellent qualities and industry; he spoke of Mrs Mordaunt; and the tears stood in Uncle Harry's eyes as he murmured: 'Poor Ethel, poor thing!' But when Herbert attempted to describe the fair girl, who had been as a bright angel in that humble room, then the youth broke down in confusion; and Mr

Traher, with a long piercing look at his companion, exclaimed 'Humph!' However, both gentlemen agreed that no time ought to be lost, and that other means failing, the advertisement should be inserted forthwith; 'for they must be in destitution,' sighed Herbert, 'for I know they depended entirely on Mr Mordaunt's exertions for support. God grant we may soon find them!'

On the evening of that very day, the family-party—namely, Mr Danvers, Laura, Uncle Harry, and John Rutherford, who had joined them at dinner—were assembled in the drawing-room, at Mr Danvers's, and it being early summer and warm weather, the balcony-windows were open, while the numerous sweet-scented flowers outside shaded the interior from observation. The room was brilliantly lit with wax-tapers, and the soft moonlight streamed down on the flowering shrubs and exotics, and on the broad airy street which led into a magnificent square. John Rutherford was just asking Miss Danvers to favour them with some music, which John cared no more for than he did for the *Paradise Lost*, when from the street beneath arose a strain of song, preluded by a few simple chords on the harp, which arrested the attention of Uncle Harry, who exclaimed: 'Hush! what a thrilling voice!' and with finger upraised and quiet steps, he crept towards the balcony, from whence, however, he could not obtain a view of the performers, on account of the leafy screen which intervened. Miss Danvers followed him, and she also stood entranced, for the wandering minstrels were of no common order—that was clear from the masterly harp-accompaniment, and the simple pathos, clear and brilliant, of the young voice which rose on the evening air, and entered that luxurious apartment wafted with the odours of the flowers. The song ended, Uncle Harry took out his purse to reward the itinerants, when John Rutherford remarked, that 'these kind of people must realise a vast deal of money in the streets; and, for his part, he considered it was giving encouragement to vagrants to give them anything'—'Or to give anybody anything,' gruffly muttered Uncle Harry, crushing in among the flower-stands, in the vain hope of reaching the balustrade, and throwing a handful of silver to the poor wanderers below. But ere he could manage to do this, another harp-prelude, of a wild and mournful character, hushed them all into silence; and as the voice again swelled into the full burst of song, Uncle Harry turned pale, and trembled; and so uncontrollably agitated did he become as the song proceeded, that Mr Danvers, fearing he was ill, asked what was the matter in a tone of great alarm.

'Hush!' said Mr Traher—'hush!' and so peremptorily was the word repeated, that Mr Danvers retreated, looking somewhat offended. His visitor, however, was far too engrossed to remark this; and when the sweet voice ceased, and the harp-music died away, Uncle Harry exclaimed, in a voice choked by emotion:

'I haven't heard that song since I was a boy. It is a Cornish ballad, which poor Ethel used to warble; and I must go down and give these people something for the painful pleasure they have afforded me. But, hark!—they begin again.' And after a brief space, Uncle Harry cried, in a state of the utmost excitement: 'This is strange!—another old air which I'm sure only Cornishers can know. It was our mother's favourite. I must see who these poor folks are.'

Miss Danvers followed the impatient nabob down stairs, and placing her hand on his arm, said: 'You must not go out, dear uncle; you may take cold in the evening air. We will have the harp and singer in the hall;' and turning to a domestic, she gave the order.

The gorgeously liveried servant soon returned, followed by two persons—one, a man, bearing an old harp, who was led by his companion, a female, whose



face was not distinguishable, from the slouched bonnet which overshadowed it. The man was blind, middle-aged, but prematurely care-worn, and with silvered hair; yet there was a resignation and touching benevolence in his countenance, and a demeanour which so plainly bespoke the gentleman, despite his shabby attire, that Uncle Harry felt quite abashed in addressing him, and turned to the muffled female in an apologetical manner when he tendered the silver coins. But Miss Danvers had no such delicacy; and she addressed the singer, saying: 'This gentleman wishes to hear the songs repeated—the last two. They are Cornish melodies, he thinks; and he wishes to know where you learned them.'

There was a silence, which was broken by the harpist whispering to his companion: 'You may tell where you learned them, my dear.'

The timid form beside the blind man seemed to shrink nearer to his side, as she said, in a low, almost inaudible voice: 'They are Cornish airs, ma'am, and I learned them from my mother.'

'Is your mother Cornish, then?' bluntly asked Mr Traher, as he vainly essayed to gain a peep of the face hidden beneath the slouched bonnet.

'Yes, sir,' murmured the sweet voice again; and again there was silence.

'I'm a native of Cornwall myself,' at last blurted out Uncle Harry; 'and one of those songs you sang so beautifully was a favourite of my mother's; and it's an odd coincidence. Be so kind as to sing it again.' The voice and the harp were more enchanting in the hall than in the open air, and Mr Traher almost sobbed with emotion as he listened.

'Thank you, thank you, my good friends!' he exclaimed, pressing to the blind man's side, and placing in his hand a glittering coin: 'you must come here again before I go, for this is a treat indeed. I haven't heard that song for so many, many years. Poor Ethel!' he sighed, half speaking to himself; but the words had reached the ears of the strangers, and they caused the blind man to move forward involuntarily a step or two, as if listening to hear more. But Mr Traher was far away with memories of the past; and the harpist, fearing to intrude, made a low bow, and uttered thanks—thanks so impressive, and so unlike a common itinerant, that Miss Danvers felt convinced he was not what he appeared.

'Come, Ethel, my love!' said the blind man, as he took the female's hand, advancing to the hall-door, the liveried lackey condescending to carry out the old harp.

'Ethel!' cried Uncle Harry, placing himself before the retreating pair—'are you Ethel, too? And pray, what's your other name, and are you this worthy blind gentleman's wife or daughter?'

The female was silent, and evidently alarmed by this abrupt address, keeping tight hold of her companion's hand.

Again the blind man spoke. 'This is my dear and only child, sir,' he said; 'and I do not know why we should be ashamed of mentioning our names to one who has so bountifully rewarded our humble efforts. My name, sir, is Mordaunt; and my daughter is called Ethel, after her dear mother.'

'O merciful Providence!' cried Mr Traher; 'and is her mother living?'

'Yes, sir,' rather coldly replied the harpist, still retreating towards the door, and not understanding this unusual interest evinced by a stranger.

'Poor Ethel! poor Ethel!' sobbed Uncle Harry, now quite unmanned, and, without ceremony, clasping the astonished harpist's hand, and arresting his progress. 'Did you never hear her speak of Harry—her brother Harry? I'm he, Mordaunt! and I was going to advertise for you to-morrow; and now let me look at my niece;' and he pulled away the slouched bonnet,

and a shower of golden ringlets fell down the pale girl's shoulders; and Uncle Harry clasped her in his arms, crying: 'Tis poor Ethel herself; why is she not here?'

'Here?' said Mr Mordaunt. 'Alas! she is alive to us, but dead to the world.' And then, in a few words, drawing the blind man aside, Mr Traher heard the lamentable tale of distress unfolded.

Miss Danvers had vanished; she would not stay to witness so terrible a dénouement before the servants. A wandering ballad-singer her cousin! Oh, it was disgusting—it was not to be endured.

Uncle Harry found presently that it was time for him to think of a home elsewhere; and all his arrangements were zealously aided by Herbert Rutherford. So, bidding farewell to Mr Danvers and Laura, he soon returned to his beloved native county, accompanied by the poor Mordaunts: nor was the old harp left behind. Their troubles were over—so they declared, with deeply grateful hearts. It is true, one was stricken with paralysis, and one was blind; but what of that? Even in their utmost desolation, God had heard their prayers, nor left them to perish.

Mr Traher casually mentioned to old Rutherford his intention to give his niece Etty a handsome portion, provided she married to please him; and when Herbert signified his desire to run down into Cornwall to visit Mr Traher, who had given him a hearty invitation, Mr Rutherford senior offered no objection to the plan.

It was some time ere Etty could be induced to leave her dear parents, even to Uncle Harry's tender care; but on Herbert's promise of a long annual sojourn with them, he at length succeeded in carrying off his fair bride. The young couple resided near the metropolis; but 'Mrs John Rutherford' never would consent to call on 'Mrs Herbert Rutherford,' nor to own the relationship between them; for soon after Herbert's marriage with Ethel Mordaunt, Miss Danvers became the wife of John, her constant avain. But as this alienation did not disturb the even tenor of the flourishing business-system pursued by Rutherford, Danvers, and Rutherford, nor ruffle the equanimity of Herbert and Etty, no one thought it worth while to remonstrate with the proud and silly dame.

Uncle Harry and the blind man lived amicably together, long after poor Ethel had gone peacefully down to the grave. The old harp is preserved as a precious relic by Herbert's children; and he always declares the most fortunate day of his life to be that on which he commenced the memorable drawing-lessons.

## THE MONTH:

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

At the very end of the session, too late for us to amend our statement of last month, the Premier repented of his bad joke let off in the House against the Royal Society, and announced that he would give the £1000 grant for this year out of the contingency-fund, and bring it forward with the estimates next year, so that parliament may have the opportunity of discussing it, if they see fit. We may therefore hope that the scientific investigations already set on foot by aid of the grant, will be carried on to a successful issue, and prepare the way for new ones. The general question was brought before a meeting of the British Association by a proposition: 'Whether any measures could be adopted by the government or parliament that would improve the position of science or of its cultivators in this country.' The answer is embodied in a report drawn up by a committee appointed for the purpose, with Lord Wrottesley as chairman; an

important document, which we commend to the attention of all who are interested in the subject. The too prevalent neglect of physical science is dwelt on. Mr Grove says: 'It is melancholy to see the number of Oxford graduates who do not know the elementary principles of a telescope, a barometer, or a steam-engine. The contempt of anything manual or mechanical, which Bacon so strongly reprobated, still prevails, to a large extent, among the upper classes.' After examining the whole question, the committee suggest that 'provision should be made for effectually teaching all the various branches of physical science' in our universities; 'that professors and local teachers shall be appointed to give lectures on science in the chief provincial towns'; that the formation of museums and free libraries should be promoted; that 'by fellowships, and increased salaries to professors,' due encouragement shall be given to scientific studies; 'that scientific offices shall be placed more nearly on a level, in respect to salary, with such other civil appointments as are an object of ambition to highly educated men;' and lastly, 'that a Board of Science shall be constituted, composed partly of persons holding offices under the crown, and partly of men of the highest eminence in science, which shall have the control and expenditure of the greater part at least of the public funds given for its advancement and encouragement.' These are but the merest outlines of what the report contains: they may suffice, however, to give our readers an idea of its purport. As regards honours and rewards, our own opinion is pretty well known. The committee appear to have been not unanimous thereupon; and with respect to good-service pensions, Mr Ball says, he has 'a strong sense of the probable evils of anything approaching to a system of government patronage of scientific men, to which such pensions would be a forward step.'

That with all our advancement in science, we have yet much to learn, is demonstrated by what is taking place in Paris. The French Exposition, though far inferior to ours in general effect as a *coup d'œil*, is yet far superior in many of its details. To mention but two—philosophical instruments and calico-printing. There is a finish about the instruments of the Parisian makers which we have not yet attained; and in the calico-printing, science as well as art is called in, and the colours are applied with a brilliance and permanence and beauty of design truly admirable. The lesson thereby taught is an important one, and we hope our manufacturers will learn it.

That most magnificent of modern enterprises, the Crystal Palace, is not so flourishing as its projectors hoped, and as it deserves to be. According to the recently published annual report, the total expenditure amounts to L.1,275,000; and the total number of visitors, up to 30th of June last, 1,322,008. The first year's net profit is set down at L.66,000; and the outlay as L.1000 a week. The Palace is so popular a place of resort, that, were the directors to take a proper view of its capabilities for trade, and to charge a reasonable price for refreshments, they would perhaps have more reason than at present to consider their prospect encouraging. In future, the annual meetings are to be held in June instead of August; and Sir Joseph Paxton, ceasing his active superintendence, remains attached to the concern somewhat in the character of 'consulting engineer.' The half-yearly reports of some of the chief railways, and the miserable dividends declared, do but confirm what has long been foreseen by those who knew that reckless expenditure, flinging away hundreds of thousands in law and parliamentary expenses, would eventuate, as the Americans say, in

something like ruin. Notwithstanding the drag occasioned by enormous outlay in past years, there is good reason to believe that if railway directors would cease to pursue that one fixed idea to which we have often alluded, they would not have to meet their shareholders with declarations of deficient resources. The success of some of our joint-stock banks presents a striking contrast—dividends of from six to twenty per cent. Taking advantage of these results, and the new law of limited liability, several new banks have just been started. The Post-office, too, shews a satisfactory return: the gross revenue for the financial year 1854-55, including foreign and colonial postage, is L.2,689,916; while the charges of management amount to L.1,479,876. Here we have evidence that at least in one important government department, the right men are in the right places.

Our two metropolitan Archæological Societies have been enjoying the fine weather after their manner: one, in a series of picnic visits to the antiquities of the Welsh marches, where Scott lays the scene of *The Betrothed*; the other, in the Isle of Wight. The effect of these annual outdoor gatherings is already felt; and our ancient remains are now likely to be better respected and understood. At a meeting of the Somerset Archæological Society, Sir W. C. Trevelyan announced a fact which some will consider of more importance than ruins—that a large vein of carbonate of iron has been found in the Brendon Hills. The value of this discovery will be best appreciated by manufacturers of steel, as hitherto the chief supply has been obtained from Silesia at a cost of three-quarters of a million annually. And it appears that we are to get inexhaustible supplies of iron from India; for Mr Henwood, of Penzance, who was sent out by the East India Company to make a survey, has just returned, reporting the existence of a large iron district between Almorah and the mountains. The metal is of excellent quality, and in quantity more than can well be calculated. Not much longer will India have to depend on England for her railway iron.

In California, the miners, while tunnelling the hills, 'have brought to light the dry beds of ancient rivers, at a great depth below the surface, which are found to be very rich, the gold having all the appearance of having been carried along the bottoms of the ancient streams, until the occurrence of some great convulsion which filled up the channels and buried the gold.' Parties of explorers, attracted by visions of the yellow ore, are still heard of from time to time about the head-waters of the Amazon. As yet, they have been disappointed of the wished-for result; but as every visit makes us more acquainted with the noble river and its tributaries, the general result will be beneficial. As an instance of the facility with which the region may be penetrated, Don Manuel Jjura, governor of one of the mountain provinces, traversed by the Amazon, steamed from Nauta to New York in thirty days. Nauta is a small town at the foot of the Andes; and should the Brazilian government oppose no impediment to the free navigation of the river, we shall soon hear of something important accomplished in the way of trade.

The Australians have awarded a gold medal to Captain Cadell for his successful navigation of the river Murray to a distance of 1450 miles from the sea; and with the promise of a gift of L.4000, if within eighteen months he will have two more steamers plying on the river. And with reference to the ever-important cotton question, a suggestion has been made for the establishment of a cotton-growing colony in New Guinea: the climate is described as eminently suitable; while China is near at hand to supply any number of hardy colonists. The Geographical Society of Paris offer prizes for further discoveries in Africa, and for explorations of the Blue and White Nile; and

the French Government are aiding by grants of money the opening of a travel-route from Algeria to Senegambia, foreseeing great advantage in such a connection of their two colonies.

The society above mentioned have published some further particulars respecting the products from China, for which their gold medal was awarded to M. Montigny, French consul at Shanghai. We drew attention to the facts in a former month; and may add here, that the Chinese yam, introduced as a substitute for the potato, will keep for five years without germinating; it does not suffer from frost, and appears to be superior to the potato in most if not all respects. A cultivator in Paris got more than 50,000 sets in one season: a square metre of ground suffices for 20 sets; and it is said that the produce from one hectare amounts to 60,000 kilogrammes—double that of the potato.

The sweet sorgho also has succeeded in the south of France. Judging from present experiences, this plant appears destined to fill up the gap between latitude 44 degrees and the sugar-cane-bearing regions of the tropics. Forty-four is the southern limit of profitable cultivation of the beet-root; thus France may now produce sugar in both sections of her empire. Besides sugar, the sorgho gives abundance of alcohol, a species of cider, one or two liqueurs, and molasses convertible into rum. The leaves and refuse cane are excellent food for cattle; and, moreover, the plant has properties useful in dyeing. Forty acres have been planted for the dyers of Lyon.

The Chinese pea has been sown and come to perfection not only in France, but in Germany, Sweden, Holland, and Italy. It is of an oleaginous nature, and yields twenty-five per cent. of oil superior in quality to rape or colza. The cake serves to fatten cattle; and in China and Japan, this pea, reduced to flour, and made into a kind of cheese, is eaten by millions of the poorer population. In addition to these important vegetables, there is a species of dry rice—said to grow anywhere—the Corean bean, and a prolific sort of canary grass.

A dozen yaks were also sent: these animals partake of the nature of the horse, ox, mule, and goat. Their wool is admirable, and can be shorn twice in the year. They inhabit mountains; and of the twelve, three have been kept in Paris, and the others placed in the Jura and other hill-districts, where they have already begun to breed. It is believed that the yak will prove valuable as a beast of draught and burden, in addition to the worth of its fleece. And lastly, silk-worms: the breed of these insects had so greatly degenerated in France, that the sericulturists had to buy 12,000,000 francs' worth of the eggs every year from Italy, to keep up their stocks. They will now have in the Chinese silk-worm a new and vigorous race.

Since the war broke out, the Admiralty have engraved and published a hundred sheets of maps of the Baltic, Black and White Seas, charts of the coasts and gulfs, &c.—giving a better knowledge of those waters than ever we had before. They are sold with sailing-directions at a very cheap rate. Soundings and surveys are still going on in the unknown parts. The French have been for years engaged in a survey of the Mediterranean, and have just made careful soundings of the Gut of Gibraltar. They find it to be in some places more than 2000 feet deep. We are told that a sum of £677,000 is wanted to complete the Ordnance Survey of Scotland, and that, with an annual instalment of £70,000, the work can be accomplished in ten years.

Our plodding neighbours the Dutch have brought their stupendous task of draining the Lake of Haarlem to a close by the sale of the last parcels of land reclaimed. By pumping out the water, they gained 20,000 acres of excellent land, which sold for 8,000,000 florins. The cost of the work was 10,000,000. In a

few years, all the outlay will be repaid, and a handsome profit will accrue. This success has revived that often debated question—the drainage of the Zuyder Zee.

Those who occupy themselves with agricultural data may be interested in knowing, that the harvest began in the neighbourhood of Paris on the 5th of July in 1845; in 1846, June 28; in 1847, July 1; in 1848, July 6; in 1849, July 8; in 1850, July 16; in 1851, July 20; in 1852, July 22; in 1853, July 25; in 1854, July 31. Here we see a later commencement year by year ever since 1847. In the present year, there was a movement in the other direction: the harvest began on the 20th July. It will be useful to compare these dates with beginnings on this side the Channel: the harvest season here has been magnificent, partaking of the dry weather, of which we have had so much of late. Only in July was the general course disturbed: in that month, more than four inches of rain fell. An observer at Doncaster states the average of July, for eighteen years previous, to be three inches; and that the fall, in the case mentioned, is the first which has come up to the average for nearly two years. We hear that, notwithstanding storms, the wheat-crop in the United States is estimated at 168,500,000 bushels.

Endeavours are being made for the formation of a Scottish Meteorological Association, with the Duke of Argyll as president, the subscription to be 10s. The promoters have our heartiest wishes for their success. Scotland presents very remarkable weather phenomena; and in the investigation of these, and in correspondence with the society already established here in London, they will find worthy scope for their exertions. The Edward Forbes Memorial Fund is to be applied in the form of a bronze-medal, to be competed for annually by the students of the School of Mines. Thus the distinguished professor's name will be perpetuated among those who aspire to tread in his steps. The Polytechnic Institute has added to its scientific attractions a lecture on aluminum; and admiring audiences may now see a bar of the new metal with their own eyes.

We conclude with a fact or two interesting to all who have ever suffered from toothache. Mr Blundell, a city dentist, by the application of ice to the jaw, so deadens its sensibility that he extracts teeth without pain; and Dr Roberts has described before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts, his method for cauterising the dental nerve, whereby a tooth may be stopped without pain, or a stump become a support for a new tooth; while the use of arsenic, and the ordinary intimidating mode of cauterisation, are avoided. He applies a wire to the patient's tooth, and heats it by means of a small Grove's battery. 'The advantages,' he says, 'to be obtained by this instrument are—its easy application to the desired spot in the mouth, and that perfectly cold, instead of alarming the patient by holding a red-hot iron before his face: its being at once raised to the requisite heat, and no more than the mere point of the wire used being heated; also from its being at once cooled on simply removing the finger from the spring.

The annual prizes of the Scottish Society of Arts—namely, thirty sovereigns, and gold and silver medals—are offered for 'Inventions, discoveries, and improvements in the useful arts.' Among the subjects mentioned are—ventilation, sewerage, mortars and cements, locks and tools, steam-engines, machines for printing and carpentry; for 'rendering the electric light available in practice, particularly in the illumination of mines;' paints, paper, pens, ink, photography, watchmaking, and hats. Are we never to get rid of our present ridiculous style of hat?

An attempt has been made to light the town of Deal by the electric light, and, as we hear, it failed. Prizes are waiting for those who shall succeed. And to conclude: of all the ponderous appliances used in the present war, the most ponderous will be the huge



shells now being manufactured, as is said, at the Low Moor Ironworks, near Bradford. If report speaks truly, they weigh twenty-six hundredweights without the charge.

### THE TRÉNISE OF THE QUADRILLE.

It is now, we believe, about forty years ago since the quadrille was imported into England, together with many other pretty and graceful things, for which we are indebted to our Parisian neighbours. Ever since that time, the name of 'Trénise,' as attached to the third figure of the *contre-danse*, must have been familiar alike to young and old; and even now, when other foreign dances seem more in vogue among our English youth, the 'stately quadrille' still maintains its supremacy in those circles where royalty leads the way in the mazy dance. Scarcely need our readers be reminded, that at the magnificent ball recently given at the Hôtel de Ville, in Paris, and whose splendour, combined with its historic significance, secures for it a place in the world's annals, the gaieties of the evening were commenced by a *quadrille*, danced by the Emperor of the French and our own gracious Queen. But who, among the thousands present at that fairy scene of grandeur, called to mind, while the measure of the Trénise was floating around, the man whose name had been thus immortalised in the annals of Terpsichore?

It was in the opening of the present century, at a time when other stars were rising upon the political horizon of France, that the accomplished M. de Trénise shone out upon the social world of Paris. The terrors of the Revolution had given place to the eager pursuit of pleasure; and in the still unsettled state of society, an authority in fashion was welcomed in Parisian circles with almost as much enthusiasm as were those who held within their grasp the higher destinies of the state.

M. de Trénise was not an artiste, like Vestris or Gardel; he was only an *amateur de la première force* in the art of dancing. His position in the world was a favourable one; for while his social talents secured him a welcome at all the brilliant fêtes of Paris, he found himself also entitled, by his birth, to a place among the more exclusive circles of the Faubourg St Germain. There was a vein of originality in his conversation which charmed and interested his hearers, unless when the subject chanced to turn upon dancing; and then he became so serious and philosophical, as unconsciously to excite a smile even among his greatest admirers. So far as the practical part of his art was concerned, however, all alike admired the earnest gracefulness of his manner and the elegance of his movements. In the fashionable world, it was regarded as a compliment by *each* *fair débutante* to be selected as the partner of M. de Trénise in a quadrille; but the crowning triumph of all was to be his partner in a *menuet de la cour*, the poetry of which was admirably rendered in all its varied movements by M. de Trénise.

On one memorable evening, when all the most brilliant society in Paris was assembled at a *bal de noce* given to Madame Junot—subsequently Duchess d'Abrantes—M. de Trénise had engaged himself for the *menuet de la cour*, as partner to the fair bride, whose grace and beauty made her worthy of this distinguished honour; but either through carelessness or eccentricity, he delayed appearing at the ball until past midnight. The First Consul was there in all the freshness of his newly-acquired honours, the observed of all observers; Josephine, too, with her graceful urbanity of manners and elegant magnificence of toilette, shared the public attention; but the absence of M. de Trénise was not the less observed and lamented. Eleven o'clock came, and some impatience was manifested for the promised minuet. The only one who secretly rejoiced at this delay was the fair bride

herself, who would gladly have avoided so formidable an undertaking. For three whole weeks she had received long and conscientious lessons from Gardel, who declared her perfect in the poetic dance; and yet she besought her mother to spare her this dreaded minuet. 'What! not to dance the *Queen's Minuet* at your wedding-ball! Never was such a thing heard of! In my time, we used to dance three or four minuets in an evening; and you, who have had Gardel and St Armand for your masters! O no! it is impossible, my love!'

And so the youthful bride was awaiting her partner. But the night was wearing on—it was now nearly midnight, and still M. de Trénise did not appear. So it was decided that she should dance it with another *beau danseur*, who was present—M. de Lafitte—a sort of rival of M. de Trénise in the art of dancing. But a difficulty arose—he had no three-cornered hat; and how could a minuet be performed without the indispensable *chapeau bras*? One was, however, quickly procured for him, and the minuet was danced to perfection; but just as M. de Lafitte, with his three-cornered hat in one hand, and with the other leading his fair partner to her seat, crossed the room, they encountered M. de Trénise, who eyed them both with such evident displeasure, that Madame Junot hastened to excuse herself for not having awaited his arrival. She told him, that having waited for him till midnight, her mother had insisted on her dancing with M. de Lafitte; adding, in a very gentle tone: 'I hope, my dear sir, you will kindly excuse this non-observance of my word. You have, I am sure, too much *esprit* to be offended at such a trifle, more especially as you are a little to blame in the matter yourself.'

'You are right, madame,' replied he gravely, seating himself at the same time between her and one of her friends; 'and,' added he, 'I have doubtless philosophy enough to console myself for not having danced Madame Junot's *epithalamium*. Yet there were many laurels to be gathered in the steps of this *menuet de la reine*. I would have danced it gravely, seriously, and yet not sadly. Yes, that would have pleased me. But after having seen what I have seen! O never can I forget it!'

Madame Junot looked alarmed. 'You make me uneasy, sir. What have I done?' inquired she eagerly.

'What have you done, madame? You who dance so inimitably well, that we are all happy to engage you—you who have been taught by Gardel—you go and dance this minuet with a man—a very good dancer, without doubt—yes, he dances quadrilles admirably; but as for the great art of bowing with his hat, he has never had an idea about it in his life! O madame, he has no conception of the *révérence du chapeau*!'

M. de Trénise's two lady-listeners laughed at his solemn remarks with all the light-hearted gaiety of sixteen; but he was so immersed in his own speculations concerning the mystery of this grand final bow, that he scarcely either heard or heeded them.

'Ah, ladies! that seems easy enough to you, I dare say, to put on one's hat aright, for that is the whole secret of the matter. It is easy enough to talk about it: every dancing-master will explain the whole theory of placing the hat upon the brow; but the dignity, the *aplomb* by which the movement of the arm must be guided—that cannot be taught. Allow me, for a moment,' added he, starting off his seat, and placing himself before a large mirror. Then humming the few last bars of the minuet, he bowed with graceful dignity to his own image, and placed his three-cornered hat upon his head with all the seriousness suitable to so important a movement.

This scene took place in a boudoir, to which Madame Junot had retreated from the more oppressive atmosphere of the ball-room, so that there were but few persons present to witness it. Junot, however, hearing

his wife's merry laugh from the adjoining saloon, soon joined the circle. Another and a greater man followed him closely.

Napoleon Bonaparte, attracted by the gestures of M. de Trénise, signed to his friend Junot to draw out the philosophising dancer. There was no difficulty in doing this, provided the conversation concerning dancing was addressed to him in a sufficiently grave and earnest tone, for he had no idea of gaiety at a ball. It was to him always a masked-ball, and a ball masked *en noir*. If ever the lively music of the orchestra won from him a smile, he made some sort of excuse, saying that the music made him smile, as if he were talking of a forfeit he had been forced to pay. Junot, wishing to speak with him on his favourite topic, inquired of him gravely how he got on with M. de Laftite.

'Quite as well,' replied he, 'as two men of talent, such as we are, so nearly on a par, can get on together. He is a good fellow, not envious of my success. He is very clever too. His dancing is lively and energetic. He has the advantage over me in the first eight measures of the Gavotte de Panurge; but then, the jetés! oh, there I annihilate him! In general,' added he, with the utmost gravity—'in general, il m'écrase dans le javret, et je l'étouffe dans la moelle.'

The First Consul, altogether unused to such sort of reveries, opened his eyes on hearing this solemn nonsense.

'It is really prodigious,' said he at last. 'This man is much more out of his senses than many a one who is shut up in a madhouse. Pray, is he a friend of yours, Madame Junot?'

'Not a friend, in the strict acceptance of the word,' replied the youthful bride; 'only an intimate acquaintance; but, unless at a ball, he never talks of dancing, for he is a clever, well-informed man, a very good linguist, and particularly addicted to the study of ancient history. His favourite topic is the ancient customs and manners of Greece.'

Bonaparte looked incredulous, and was silent. Doubtless, he remained of the same opinion regarding the philosophising dancer; and perhaps he pitied the man who had no nobler monomania than that of being superior to all others in the final *révérence du menuet de la cour*.

M. de Trénise's sovereignty in this respect was at least an undisturbed one; and although his stately dance has passed away to make room for the polkas and galopades which are more genial to the bustling impetuous age in which we live, a remembrance of his supremacy will still exist so long as the Trénise keeps its place among the graceful movements of our social world.

#### CORNISH MINERS.

You will see, as you saw in the market-place at Truro, a marked difference between miners and field-labourers. The intelligence gleaming in their eyes, and their general expression, denote a habit of thinking for themselves, as you will find by their shrewd remarks, if you get into talk with them. In daily conflict with rude circumstances, their native resources are developed and multiplied. Their ingenuity is manifest in the numerous improvements they have made in their tools and machinery. They will pierce a shaft in two or three different divisions—one party working from the surface, another from one of the upper-most galleries, and a third from the deeper workings; and, when complete, the several portions of the shaft shall all meet in a true perpendicular. Their risks are great. According to Dr Barham, one-half of the miners die of consumption between the ages of thirty-five and fifty. Some are killed every year by falling from the ladders in their ascent or descent; and numbers maimed by the daily blastings, in which the county explodes three hundred tons of gunpowder annually. In Gwennap, the deaths by violence are one in five. . . . The temperature at

the bottom of the United Mines was recently 104 degrees; and in this the miners had to work. A stream of water at 98 degrees ran through the same level; and an attempt was made to mitigate the heat by sending in at a few yards' distance a fall of cold water, which lowered the temperature near it fourteen degrees. The men, who worked naked, would rush from the end of the level, stand for a minute or two under the cold torrent, and then back to their labour again.—*White's Londoner's Walk to the Land's End.*

#### STANZAS.

THE young, the young! that must be old!  
How little of such wreck they dream  
When launched on life's delusive stream,  
Or that the wing shall ever fold  
On which they soar so blithely now,  
Or the glad spirit ever bow  
Beneath a doom so cold!

The wayworn, aged one they see,  
Nor linger in the race  
To think that like that withered face  
Their own shall one day be!  
And left of all youth's laughing hours,  
Its fairy wreath of gems and flowers,  
Nought—save their memory!

The old, the old! that have been young!  
Strangely such memories must awake,  
Even as though buried voices spake,  
Or spirit hand were flung  
At dead of night o'er chords that long  
Unused have been to touch or song  
Neglected and unstrung!

Steals the dim vision slowly on  
The things that were—the days of yore,  
The lost, earth never shall restore.  
Lo! as they gaze, 'tis gone!  
And Memory droops her head again  
Shrinks from the throb of waking pain;  
She sleeps—the spell is done!

J. H.

#### ABSENCE OF MIND.

I heard of a clergyman who went jogging along the road till he came to a turnpike. 'What is to pay?' 'Pay, sir! for what?' asked the turnpike-man. 'Why, for my horse, to be sure.' 'Your horse, sir! what horse?' Here is no horse, sir.' 'No horse? God bless me,' said he suddenly, looking down between his legs, 'I thought I was on horseback.' Lord Dudley was one of the most absent men I think I ever met in society. One day he met me in the street, and invited me to meet myself. 'Dine with me to-day; dine with me, and I will get Sydney Smith to meet you.' I admitted the temptation he held out to me, but said I was engaged to meet him elsewhere. Another time, on meeting me, he put his arm through mine, muttering: 'I don't mind walking with him a little way; I'll walk with him as far as the end of the street.' As we proceeded together, W—— passed. 'That is the villain!' exclaimed he, 'who helped me yesterday to asparagus, and gave me no toast.' He very nearly overset my gravity once in the pulpit. He was sitting immediately under me, apparently very attentive, when suddenly he took up his stick, as if he had been in the House of Commons, and tapping on the ground with it, cried out in a low but very audible whisper: 'Hear, hear, hear!'—*Sydney Smith.*

Will E. C., who wrote to us on the 31 September on a point in natural history, communicate by name?

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